

America is losing not only the lives of our soldiers, not only are we going into a great financial debt borrowing money from Beijing to fight a war in Baghdad, but we are losing our moral position in the world, continuing to prosecute a war that is simply based on lies. Let's face it, every assertion made that took us into Iraq has been ripped away as being a lie.

So what are we to do? H.R. 1234 does the following: It is predicated on Congress taking action to end the war, stop the funding. At that point, the administration will go to the world community and say, "Look, the money is no longer here for the war. We are going to close our bases, we are going to end the occupation, we are going to bring our troops home." Only by asserting that we will end the occupation will we be in a position to be able to get help from the world community, which really doesn't want anything to do with this war absent the United States taking a new direction.

The insurgency is fueled by the occupation. It is well understood. So we end the occupation. But then that is not enough. We need the international community to help us build a peacekeeping and security force that would move in as our troops move out.

The elements of the plan embodied in H.R. 1234 are the following: Not only do we end the occupation and bring our troops home and get the international community involved, but we also create the context for a program of reconciliation between the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds. Right now there is no movement towards reconciliation, because with the U.S. occupying, the Shiites don't have any incentive at all to do that. We need to move out so that we can set in place a program of reconciliation and a program of honest reconstruction. No more theft from the American taxpayers or the Iraqi people by these contractors whose performance has been absolutely abominable, who have stolen billions of dollars. Give the Iraqi people a chance to have their own reconstruction program, with the jobs going to the people of Iraq so they can feed their families. In an economy with 50 percent of the people unemployed, we need to take a new approach and end the reconstruction program as it exists and start a new one.

In future presentations to this Congress, I intend to lay out the rest of H.R. 1234, which is the plan to end the war, bring our troops home, stabilize Iraq, and take a new chapter in America's relationship with the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. HULSHOF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HULSHOF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## THE GLOBAL NATURE OF OUR ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we clearly saw last week with the sharp decline in our stock market following a major drop in the Chinese market, the increasingly global nature of our economy is one of the most defining issues of our time. The growing connectedness of the world's consumers, producers, workers, and investors is having an impact on virtually every aspect of our lives. And with all the rapid change that globalization is bringing about, it is very natural for us to ask ourselves the question: Have these changes been for the better? We want to know if globalization is improving our lives or making them worse.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest concerns that we have when we look at this question is the issue of income inequality, something that many people are talking about. We read reports of massive executive salaries, and compare them to the circumstances of America's middle class and the concerns that working families have, and we inevitably wonder if the system is in fact fair. I recently spoke here on this issue, on this very question.

The critical issue is not, Mr. Speaker, whether those at the top are becoming more prosperous; the critical issue is whether everyone is becoming more prosperous, particularly those who are at the bottom of the economic ladder.

We looked at the issue of wages and saw that they are growing for all workers. But when we looked even deeper, we saw that the outlook is even more positive. The purchasing power of working families is increased by lower taxes and greater access to low-cost goods through international trade. This growing purchasing power, along with rising wages, is increasing the standard of living for all Americans, with the greatest positive impact for those who are just beginning to move up the economic ladder.

Today, I want to look at another issue that helps to answer the question of whether quality of life is improving for everyone; that is, the issue of jobs, Mr. Speaker. More specifically, new job creation, and the quality of those new jobs.

Jobs are perhaps the most critical issue in determining standards of living. Does everyone who wants a job have a job? Does that job provide the opportunity to prosper and improve one's quality of life? Just as we saw with wages, the numbers demonstrate a very positive outlook for workers. Unemployment is at 4.6 percent, a rate that is exceptionally low. Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have had 16 straight months of unemployment at 5 percent or less. At the same time, the workforce has been rapidly expanding. Our economy has created nearly 7½ million new jobs in the last 3½ years. There are 146 mil-

lion Americans working today, more than at any time in our Nation's history. The jobs outlook in the United States continues to be very, very good.

But just like with wages, we see an even fuller picture, a better picture when we dig just a little deeper. Average monthly hires last year were nearly 5 million, the highest rate ever since data have been collected. Of those 5 million, the share of workers who left their old job voluntarily for new work was also at the highest level. 58.3 percent made that move. This means that workers are not just finding jobs, they are finding better jobs, better opportunities. Anyone who has been stuck in a dead-end job knows that this is a huge quality of life issue.

Having a job is essential to providing for a family, and any job can serve as a starting point to success. But having a good job that offers new opportunities to prosper is essential to a growing standard of living.

The fact that we are seeing 5 million new hires every month demonstrates a great deal of churn and dynamism in our workforce, and we know that that change is not always easy.

But the rapidly growing number of workers who are voluntarily leaving their old jobs demonstrates that new and better opportunities are being created. It demonstrates, Mr. Speaker, the increased confidence in our workforce that comes with growing prosperity and the prospect of a better life. And it also helps to answer the question of whether the standard of living is improving for everyone, not just those who are at the top of the economic ladder.

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New jobs and new opportunities are helping to make all of us more prosperous.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue to pursue pro-growth economic policies, including an embrace of America's global leadership role. Those policies have brought about this dynamic workforce, where everyone is upwardly mobile.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## BALLAD OF THE ALAMO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE.

In the southern part of Texas  
In the town of San Antonio  
There's a fortress all in ruins  
That the weeds have overgrown.